



# 2021 Annual Report



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# Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, Food Banks Alberta respectfully acknowledges that our member food banks across the Province are on Treaty 6, 7, 8 and 10 territory, the traditional land of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, in what is now known as Alberta.

We cannot talk about food in a place without acknowledging the land from which it comes. We cannot explore the present, or consider the future, without understanding the past. This includes acknowledging the historical impacts of colonization that continue to persist within and around us. This land, its gifts of fertile soil, waters, wildlife, and

beauty, have sustained Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. We honor and respect the precious food sources discovered, harvested, and cultivated by Indigenous peoples over centuries, and remain grateful to them for their connectedness to this land and their food traditions.

We make this acknowledgement with intention and accept the responsibility of all we continue to learn. We will honor the resources which sustain us today through their protection. May food be just one of many connections we use in our work to repair relationships with Indigenous people of all Nations living here today.







Our leadership and strong network relationships create connected communities to sustain lasting social change.

# VISION



We lead by creating new opportunities, increasing knowledge, sharing resources, and delivering innovative programs. We seed connections for positive social change.



# MISSION



# A Message from Food Banks Alberta

## Dear Friends,

What a busy year! 2021 continued the trend set in 2020 to be one of the most challenging years in our history. Food Banks across Alberta are responding to increased levels of food insecurity in our communities, a situation that continues to impact Albertans across all parts of our province today. At the same time, 2021 was also an immense year of growth and transformation: growth in the number of people accessing food banks, growth in membership, and growth in support and community.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to acknowledge the continued impacts of colonization on the people and communities that we serve. As an Association, we are comprised of members of all Nations - Indigenous and Non, and we are committed to listening, learning, and growing.

As an Association, we have formed a Truth and Reconciliation Member Committee, as well as an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, to focus on the systemic and institutional barriers that face many members of our community. We are committed to moving forward with intention to adopt practices and systems that acknowledge and remove barriers and discrimination for the people and agencies that we support.

In that vein, across Canada, it is projected that 1 in 4 Canadians will access social support services in 2022; approximately 25 percent of our population.

The pandemic exacerbated food insecurity across some of our most vulnerable communities: children, seniors, and those with disabilities.

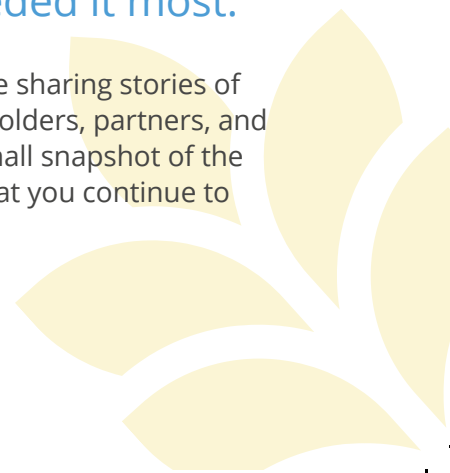
In this report, you will read how many of our innovative and resilient food bank members rose to yet another year of challenges, continuing to adapt their services and meet the needs of their communities - despite the impacts of a weakened economy, and the uncertainty of the future.

However, what is just as astounding as the level of food insecurity across our province, is the responses that we have received from our communities, volunteers, and donors - both large and small. Thanks to your generosity and efforts, food banks across Alberta were able to be supported in ways we never thought possible.



**In 2021, we distributed 1,442,191 lbs of healthy food to our member food banks - and in turn, into the hands of the Albertans who needed it most.**

In reading this report, we are sharing stories of the generosity of our stakeholders, partners, and donors - and this is just a small snapshot of the overwhelming generosity that you continue to provide.





Disaster in many forms has devastated our communities in recent years. From the flooding in southern and northern Alberta, to the on-going threat of wildfires, to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have all felt the impacts of disaster in our personal lives in some way, shape, or form. We know that in times of disaster, food banks are called as critical resources to support displaced people, and to provide nutritional supports to communities in immediate need. Alongside our ongoing pandemic response, we successfully launched the Emergency Preparedness Response Plan (EPRP) in partnership with Food Banks BC, funded by the Canadian Red Cross. This EPRP will allow food banks across Alberta and British Columbia to access processes, policies, critical infrastructure, and resources in times of need - accessible via web portal, USB stick, or in hard copy. Because of this initiative, we will be able to support member food banks to be even more responsive to their communities in times of need.

Lastly, we'd like to celebrate our growth and change. In 2021, our Food Banks Alberta team grew to include a Development Manager, Jason Lyver, who focuses on building partnerships and relationships with donors, stakeholders and members.

In late November, the Board of Directors appointed Arianna Scott to Chief Operating Officer.

Arianna has been instrumental in bringing meaningful change to Food Banks Alberta, positioning the organization for areas of growth in both fundraising and membership, building intentional relationships with levels of government, including Federal and Provincial Ministers, Municipal and County leadership, and creating enhanced value for our members. Arianna is keenly aware of the challenges that face Albertans in relation to food security, and she brings a collaborative lens and relationship-based approach to our work. We are fortunate to have Arianna's expertise and passion for food banking at the helm of our organization.

In 2021, Food Banks Alberta grew to 107 members in 2021, a record high. This growth allows us to continue to share resources and knowledge, create new opportunities like those that you will read in these pages, and most importantly - to build connected communities to sustain lasting, social change.

We know that the impacts of the pandemic, natural catastrophes, and economic factors and conflict abroad will continue to impact Albertans in the coming year, and our members will continue to be there for the people who need it most. We thank you for standing with us, and supporting our mission as we strive to build stronger, food-secure communities.

**We invite you to continue to build these communities alongside us.**



**Doug Tweddle,**  
Board Chair



**Arianna Scott,**  
CEO



# The Landscape

## 2021 HungerCount



Food Banks Canada released their first HungerCount Report since 2019 in 2021.

The HungerCount is an annual survey conducted by Food Banks Canada in March of each year to collect, analyze and share information about food bank use across the country.

79 member food banks across Alberta participated in the data

collection for Food Banks Canada, where they report on everything from demographic data, to challenges facing their communities, to funding.

In October, Food Banks Canada released the HungerCount report, and we learned that Alberta experienced a 30% increase in food bank use in comparison to previous years.

### Key Findings:

**116,396**

*Albertans visited a food bank in March 2021.*

There were over

**44,586**

*visits to Alberta food banks by children in March 2021.*

**45% of**

*Alberta's food bank users are families.*

**15.2% of**

*of food bank users receive Provincial Disability Supports.*

**In rural Alberta**

**30.5% of**

*food bank users are seniors or persons with a disability.*

**1 in 8**

*Canadians access a community food program like a food bank.*



**The HungerCount's purpose is twofold:** to confirm trends in food bank use that member food banks had seen over the past 18 months, but also to prepare food banks for the future challenges they would face.

**We learned that for the first time in recent history, a perfect storm had arisen which created pressures on Canadians from coast to coast:** rising food and housing costs, and pandemic-related job losses. Food Banks Canada projected that one-in-seven food banks will experience a doubling in demand in the coming months.

In rural Alberta, we know that seniors and those with disabilities are accessing their community food banks with increasing frequency. A large portion of this increase is due to the fact that social supports have not kept up with the cost of living.



“

***Benefits that were available to the rest of the country, like CERB that made such a difference in keeping households afloat just weren't available to seniors and those with disabilities. The fact is, food costs keep rising, and so do the basics like rent and transportation. They just can't afford to do it all."***

The HungerCount reported that Canadians on fixed incomes like seniors and disability benefits make up 27% of visits across the country, indicating that the trend in access continues nationally. Proactively, and in response to these findings, many food banks across the province have launched delivery programs and partnerships to meet the needs of seniors and isolated individuals who may have difficulty accessing their local food banks.

Food Banks Alberta received provincial and national news coverage on the findings within the HungerCount report, sparking conversation and highlighting the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We shared our concerns for the most vulnerable Albertans as we continue to face rising costs - of food, housing, and daily living, and the impacts this has on our overall well-being.



# LEAD:

## Food Banks Alberta Joins Forces with Alberta Counsel

By Aileen Burke, Alberta Counsel



Alberta Counsel has the immense pleasure of working with Food Banks Alberta. Work began in February of this year, and we have hit the ground running. Together, Food Banks Alberta and Alberta Counsel homed in on the top three government relations priorities that the Association would like to focus on for the next year:

1. Building awareness of Food Banks Alberta priorities within the UCP Caucus and Cabinet, and the Official Opposition.
2. Advocating for policy changes, specifically the Alberta Fresh Food Tax Credit, Hunters Who Care, and FCSS legislation.
3. Advocating for Food Banks Alberta to be the designated food donation management system during disasters.

Alberta Counsel is a Law and Lobby firm that was founded after the historic 2015 Alberta election. We are a multi-partisan firm with deep roots in Alberta, specializing in government relations on a provincial and municipal level. The largest and fastest growing government relations firm in Alberta today, we are proud to represent a wide array of clients, from nonprofits to municipalities to industry associations. Committed to Indigenous reconciliation, we are also privileged to serve many First Nations and Métis communities.







With an upcoming election, Food Banks Alberta has a unique opportunity right now to advance many of these priorities. Alberta Counsel is looking forward to working with the Association to develop a cohesive election strategy that will also be used to support member food banks.

We're excited for what's to come in the next twelve months!

#### MLA Breakfast

In November 2021, Food Banks Alberta hosted 14 MLAs from across Alberta at a virtual coffee conversation. Together, we shared conversations around the concerns we are seeing across the province in regards to the impacts of inflation and the rising costs of food and hosted breakout sessions for targeted conversations with the food banks in their constituencies.

We are grateful for the shared conversations and concerns about challenges facing Albertans.





# FEED:

## Adapting to the Needs of High River

By Sarah Bruinsma, Program Coordinator  
Wild Rose Community Connections

Despite the challenges of rising food costs, inflation, and more people than ever turning to food banks for support, our members have continued to pivot and adapt programming to meet the ever-changing and unique needs of their communities. Wild Rose Community Connections (WRCC) runs several food security programs throughout the Foothills. The largest are the **Food Rescue Programs** which operate in High River and Claresholm.

Food is rescued from 35 local grocery stores, businesses, restaurants, and events. These food items would otherwise need to be thrown away due to damage, excess or imminent best-before dates. The perishable and non-perishable food is distributed in food packages supplemented by food from Food Banks Alberta to registrants of the program.



To date,  
**301,435**

pounds of food has  
been distributed to the  
community.



The WRCC team delivers food packages to 10 other smaller rural communities that don't have the means to travel into the towns to participate in the program.

WRCC has noticed that there has been a dramatic increase in registrants for the program, yet significantly less food in the community to rescue, in part due to food shortages, increased purchasing, and other related challenges. The pandemic, increasing food prices, and high utility have left people in situations that most had never thought possible. WRCC is providing support to individuals that have never had to ask for help before - an additional layer in resource navigation.





In addition, WRCC runs the **“Lunch in A Crunch”** program, where students can anonymously text or call the WRCC team to be directed to where they can pick up a free, nutritious lunch during the school holidays.

In partnership with the local Sobeys, the program allows students to pick out a sandwich and piece of fruit, head to customer service and say, “Lunch in A Crunch”.

**The primary benefit of this program is that it serves as a point of entry for youth and families, with an opportunity for program staff to connect with students and parents that need longer term food and other supports.**

Lastly, in partnership with the Town of High River, WRCC launched the **Harvest High River** initiative. The Town of High River has been growing many edible items for years, but there was a lack of awareness around where these cultivated items were, and if residents were permitted to self-harvest them.

Under the Harvest High River partnership, the locations of trees, shrubs, plants and planters containing edible items is shared on the municipality’s website, allowing the public to harvest items like zucchini, apples, plums, mint, saskatoon berries, and more - free of charge.

Our community members look forward to each harvest season; Harvest High River is the new geo-caching! This partnership has not only increased the amount of edible food supply in the community, but has provided an opportunity to educate, and build awareness around the food insecurity that exists here at home.

# SHARE

## Campus Food Bank Brings Students Together

The University of Alberta in Edmonton is a large place with lots going on. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and its shift to virtual learning meant that more students than ever were faced with challenges - getting to the grocery store, connecting with their peers, or the impact of the rising cost of food on a student's budget.

**"We are a unique food bank, because in the post-secondary world, we are one of the only ones in Alberta that are not part of a student's union or student's association. Being a separate nonprofit puts us at the level of being a small food bank in the community. Because of this, we are able to be a bit more nimble and offer a different suite of programming. If you've ever been to a University campus - you know that we are a city within a city,"** - shares Madi Corry, Program Manager for Campus Food Bank.

Campus Food Bank is more than just your traditional food bank:



They're a **WECAN food** depot.



They operate a **grocery bus** program which helps students to access local grocery stores.



They offer **grocery hampers**, in addition to a program called Campus Kitchen.

The food bank knows that students need more than just direct food support.

With many University students experiencing life on their own for the first time, coupled with the shift to online learning, Campus Food Bank knew that there were unique challenges that faced their students - their lean budgets, and not knowing how to cook healthy, nutritious and affordable food.

Campus Kitchen is a program that existed long before the words COVID and pandemic entered our daily repertoire. During the stay at home orders, Campus Food Bank knew that cooking was a great way to bring students together to feel connected. Their virtual kitchens prepackaged prep ingredients so that students could prepare the dishes alongside the volunteers running the virtual cooking class. Options ranged from pasta dishes, to desserts, uses for canned items like tuna and chickpeas, and were created with students in mind.







Some of the recipes come from volunteers.

"I just come up with the parameters, and the time that the dishes need to be prepared in, and the volunteers facilitate the rest - they host the sessions, and cook the dishes. That's the really cool part about the experience; volunteers really get to personalize the offerings and share their favourite meals."

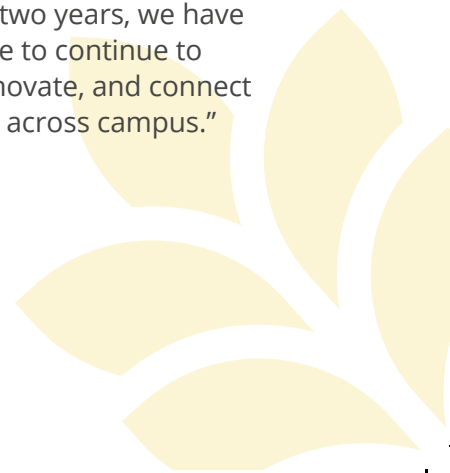


The meals vary weekly, and with the shift to virtual cooking classes, most of the dishes have shifted to one-pot meals. Examples include rice bowls with veggies and eggs, skillet meals, and cultural infusions like kimchi fried rice. If students aren't able to make it to the live event, the food bank shares their recipes after the fact. Most of the recipes rely on only ingredients that can be found in the food bank hampers, to promote accessibility for all.

**"It was really just nice to get together with peers, even if their cameras were off. Students, especially those living in campus housing or in small apartments - this was our way of being able to share a meal together. Food is something that just brings people together."**

The Campus Kitchen is available to all students enrolled in the University of Alberta. Students can sign up on the food bank website, as well as register for hampers, the bus program, or the WECAN food banklets.

"We just celebrated our 30th anniversary this year, and we are still trying to grow beyond the traditional food banking model. We want to keep up with the trends we are seeing in community, and meet the needs of our diverse student population. Despite the challenges of the past two years, we have been able to continue to grow, innovate, and connect students across campus."



# CONNECTING

## Albertans to Food Banks Close to Home

Last year, you read about the launch of our Awareness campaign that aimed to share with Albertans that food banks across the province were open, safe, and essential services that continued to operate despite lockdowns and other challenges. We continued that campaign into 2021, with a special emphasis on tax season.

We knew that with CERB, many Albertans would be faced with repayments and monies owed, and constructed a campaign focusing on the fact that Albertans shouldn't have to choose between paying their bills and putting food on the table - a challenging choice that we heard many Albertans had encountered.

“

I work in the casino industry. With the pandemic, things got tougher, but I always had really good credit. I knew the food bank was there, but I've never had to use it. My kids, they needed to eat. But they needed a roof over their heads, too.

- Jason, Food Bank Client

We also shared that food banks are more than just hamper depots - our member food banks are resource hubs that also offer services like free tax filing, and benefits navigation.

“

We know that it's been a tough couple of years. The downturn in the economy, coupled with the pandemic, it's just created such a strain. We're seeing folks now that are living in big houses, and driving really nice vehicles, and they're having to access the food bank. They're suffering a lot more, because this is a system they've never had to navigate before.

- Suzan Krecsy, Executive Director, St. Albert Food Bank

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the page, consisting of several overlapping, stylized leaf shapes in various shades of blue.

# By The Numbers

In 2021:



**6 Food Banks**  
received  
**\$2,289.56**  
in Bulk Food Subsidies



**Members**  
received  
**436,320**  
eggs from Egg  
Farmers Alberta



**8 Food Banks**  
received  
**\$4,855**  
in Rural Transportation  
Subsidies



**Approximately  
45%**  
of Alberta food bank  
users are  
families with children



**4 Food Banks**  
received  
**\$20,000**  
from the Rural  
Assistance Fund



**16 Food Banks**  
received  
**\$142,244**  
in COVID-Fund  
Grants



# CELEBRATING our Community

Food Banks Alberta and food banks across the province would not be as strong as they are without the dedicated, tireless spirit of the staff and volunteers that are embedded in the fabric of their organizations.

In celebration of these giving individuals, we would like to share our 2021 Award Winners, who exemplify the spirit, grit and tenacity of the Alberta Spirit. These awards are given out and celebrated at our Annual General Meeting each year.

**CHANGING THE FACE OF HUNGER:** Awarded to a person or organization that has truly gone above and beyond to innovate food banking for whatever reason as a solution to a barrier, a gap, or an issue facing their food bank or community.

**Recipient:** The Lord's Food Bank Rocky Mountain House

**IN CAHOOTS:** Awarded to a person or company who has partnered with us or our members in making things happen in-kind donor or partnering agency who has increased the capacity, reach, and efficacy of our members or our organization.

**Recipient:** Engynn Technologies

**DISTINGUISHED DONOR:** Awarded to an individual donor who has shown provincial support.

**Recipient:** Tami Masteron

**PHENOMENAL PHILANTHROPIST:** Awarded to the corporate donor who has demonstrated provincial support.

**Recipient:** Egg Farmers of Alberta

## ANNUAL VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Awarded to exceptional volunteers and EFB lifetime volunteers. This award was dedicated to the Hughes Family in 2021.

### Recipients:

- Doug Hughes: Edmonton Food Bank
- Richard Yoner: Leduc & District Food Bank
- Larry and Louise Lambert: St. Paul & District Food Bank
- Valerie Schaning: Wheatland County Food Bank
- Kathy Rowe: Whitecourt Food Bank
- Gordon Evans: Okotoks Food Bank

**EFB LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT:** Awarded to a person who has dedicated a lifetime to food banking whether as a volunteer or a staff. People who have been with organizations for more than a decade, embodying the values important in helping to solve food insecurity in our province, country, and world.

The Food Banks Alberta Lifetime Achievement Award is dedicated to Canada's First Food Bank and known as the EFB Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Recipient:** Marjorie Bencz

# THE SPIRIT of Generous Albertans

**\$238,319.85**

donated in  
*individual and corporate  
monetary gifts*  
to Food Banks Alberta.

**\$112,904.41**

made in  
*Gift In Kind donations  
from Community Partners.*

Our donors and supporters across the province are our lifeblood.

While the past two years have presented all of us with unthinkable challenges, we have continued to be inspired by the generosity of our community.

In the spirit of sharing, we'd like to highlight two of the major supporters who have partnered with Food Banks Alberta over the past year. A donor to Food Banks Alberta is not just supporting our Association to build stronger communities, but it's supporting our member food banks across the province through in-kind and monetary support.



## Alberta Dental Foundation

Shared by: Dr. Heidi Rabie, DMD

During the Fort McMurray flood in April 2020, 13,000 people were forced to flee their homes. Alberta Dental Foundation thought of the people staying in temporary shelters, and wanted to offer them the small comfort of home by donating toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Hygiene poverty is a concept that is often discussed, and this situation was particularly acute. As a Dental Association, we thought that this was just a small way that we could tackle such a big issue facing our community. We collaborated with our contacts at Colgate to provide quick assistance to the population. When we reached out to Wood Buffalo Food Bank, we found that it too, was flooded and operating out of a temporary shelter. Food Banks Alberta stepped in to assist with coordination and delivery.

The initiative was such a success that we continued to expand the collaboration, working with suppliers and dental donors to put together kits and expanding our offerings. With Oral Health Month in April, it made sense to host an Alberta-wide dental hygiene kit drive, to get the kits into the hands of food banking Albertans. Thus, "Brush Up Alberta" was born! Working with Food Banks Alberta made sense - we can access their wide network of warehouses and distributors, and get the kits directly into the hands of those who need it most.



## Skyline QS Consultants

Food Banks Alberta is grateful to have partners like Skyline QS Consultants, who chose us as their charity of choice for their first-ever golf tournament. Wanting to involve a charity, a colleague of Skyline QS Consultants recommended Food Banks Alberta as they have a large impact in supporting local families - two causes near and dear to their hearts.

***"As an Alberta-based company, our goal is to support the communities where we live and work. Food Banks Alberta was the perfect fit."***

- Maeve Duggan, Skyline QS Consultants

Skyline QS Consultants' enthusiasm to partner and foster social connections lead to increased awareness of Food Banks Alberta. With their financial support, we are able to continue to support member food banks across Alberta.

***"With the challenges over the last couple of years, we understand how difficult it has been for many Albertans to simply put food on the table. We believe in the work Food Banks Alberta does, and we want to continue to support an organization that helps local families in a meaningful way."***





# STRENGTHENING

## What We Do



### LONDON DRUGS

A supporter of Food Banks Alberta since 2014, the London Drugs Program provided 58,128 lbs of reclaimed food to 7 food banks in 2021.



Thanks to the generosity of our donors, funders and stakeholders, we received over **1,362,990 lbs.** of food that we were able to redistribute to our members across Alberta.

### ALBERTA SHARES

Alberta Shares is a provincial program that offers consumers a simple way to support their local food bank while shopping at their grocery store. Modeled after a program initiated in British Columbia, Alberta Shares has been operating in Alberta since 2002.

**\$177,319.97**

*donated by Alberta Shares to  
16 food banks across the province.*

**33.3%**

*of Food Bank users are children.*

*(Source: Food Banks Canada )*



# OUR SUPPORTERS

When you donate to Food Banks Alberta, you are not only donating to our Association, but you are contributing to the sustainability and support of our member food banks across the province. Your gifts impact thousands of Albertans each year. Thank you!

*We'd like to express a special thanks to:*

Ocean Trailer

Aurora Cannabis Enterprises Inc

Righteous Gelato

Myarc Electric Ltd.

Donations over \$2500

Western Communities Foundation

Alberta Medical Association

Alberta Blue Cross

Merit Kitchens (2002) Ltd

ATB Financial

Alberta Wheat Commission

Cargill Limited

CN

Alberta Dental Foundation

Skyline QS Consultants Ltd

Alberta Credit Union Managers Golf  
Association

Parrish & Heimbekcer Limited

Klaas Brobbel

Associated Engineering Alberta Ltd.

Alberta Chicken Producers

TELUS Corporation

Alberta Urban Municipalities Assoc.

Farm Credit Canada

Reynolds Mirth Richards & Farmer LLP

Gift Funds Canada



# OUR MEMBERS

Our membership grew this year. Our members continue to create connected communities to sustain lasting, social change.

*We welcomed the following new members in 2021, as our membership reached a record high of 107 members.*

Central Peace Food Bank

Vermillion Food Bank

Piikani Food Bank

Berwyn/Grimshaw Food Bank

Alix Mirror Food Bank

Youth Empowerment Support Services (YESS)





# Thank you for helping to Lead, Feed and Share in 2021!

Special thank you to our Board of Directors and communities throughout the province for working together to abolish food insecurity for Albertans.

Doug Tweddle , Chair

Craig Pilgrim, Vice Chair

Alice Kolisnyk, Vice Chair

Suzan Krecsy, Secretary

Eric Motuzas, Treasurer

Bryan Nelson, Director

Barb Reppert, Director

Kim Dumont, Director

Cory Rianson, Director

John Lake, Director

Michael Pasma, Director

Lori McRitchie, Past Director

Collette McBride, Past Director

***"It's really nice to know that you're coming in, you're making a difference. You're really doing something that matters - that matters to the community, and to the people who need it. It's just a good feeling."***

- Andrew P., Food Bank volunteer

